

**James Knox Polk to Andrew Jackson, May 12, 1845,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>PRESIDENT POLK TO JACKSON.

Washington, May 12, 1845.

Confidential

My Dear Sir: I have received your two letters of the 30th ult. and 2nd Instant, the former enclosing one from *Mr. Marshall* of Kentucky. I will attend to M's request, as soon as a vacancy at West Point occurs. I saw *Mr. Taggart* ¹ two days ago. He had been offered a place in the land office by the Secretary of the Treasury from which he was removed by *Mr. Blake* , ² and had without my knowledge declined it, preferring as he said to be attached to some other Department. I told him he had acted precipitately, as there was no certainty that a suitable vacancy would occur in any other Department. The Secretary of the Treasury happened to come in whilst he was with me. *Mr. Walker* promised him to give him a suitable place on the 1st of June, and you may rest satisfied that he will be taken care of. Say to Mrs. Jackson that it shall be so. *Thos. Donelson* who was here a few days ago, prefers a place in the Philadelphia Custom House. I made known your wishes as well as my own to Mr. Horn the new Collector two days ago, and he assured me that he would give *Mr. Donelson* the place he desired.

¹ James B. Taggart. Walker provided for him.

² Thomas H. Blake, commissioner of the General Land Office 1841–1845.

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Before the late news from England, I had tendered the mission to that Court to the South, believing from several considerations that the Minister should come from the Slave-holding section of the Union. It was declined in that quarter, leaving me free to make another selection.

3 Polk offered it successively to Calhoun, Pickens, and Elmore.

Fortunately I learned from a friend a few days ago that Mr. *Butler* of N.York, had expressed the opinion, that *Mr. Van Buren* would probably accept the mission, if it was offered to him. Instantly upon learning this, I did not hesitate to write to *Mr. Butler*, authorizing him to say to *Mr. Van Buren*, that it was my anxious desire, in the present juncture of our relations with England, to avail myself of his services and that it would give me the greatest pleasure to appoint him, if he would accept. Mr. *Butler* writes me that he had written and made known my wishes to *Mr. V. Buren*, but had not received his answer. I expect an answer in a day or two. I hope he may accept, as we want at this moment the ablest man in the country to represent our interests at the *Brittish* court. If I had had the slightest idea that *Mr. V.Buren* would have accepted, I would have offered it to him in the first instance in preference to any man in the Union.

You must have no uneasiness about the course of the administration on the Oregon question. The blustering manners and tone of defiance, of *Sir Richard 4 Peel*, *Lord John Russell* and others in the Brittish Parliament were intended probably to test our nerves. We stand firmly and boldly on our rights. We prefer peace if it can be preserved consistently with the national honor and interests, but if it cannot we are resolved to maintain our rights, at any hazard. I have myself no serious apprehensions of War. *Packenham* has since the debate in Parliament reached this country, manifested some anxiety to re-open the negotiation, and is manifestly anxious to settle the controversy amicably. Mr. *Buchanan* is firm, and is ready to meet him in a proper spirit. The negotiation will probably be re-opened very soon.

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4 Robert.

With my kind regards for your household, and my prayers for a continuance of your life, I
am most sincerely Your friend